

DISCIPLINE IN THE MILITARY AND  
CIVILIAN SOCIETIES

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## CHAPTER I

"Our leaders must be men who are convinced that war in itself is never an end, that it is never justified except as a means to a better peace. Hence their vision must extend beyond the concept of victory in battle, to that of a better world hereafter. Such men will seek to proportion and apply military power to the bare essentials of the military objective. At the same time, they will have the breadth of vision to combine military force into an integrated national strategy along with political, economic, and ideological factors which, in felicitous proportion, will generate maximum strength from the resources of the free world."<sup>1</sup>

These are the words of General D. Taylor and in essence the thesis presented in this paper but restricted to the subject: DISCIPLINE IN THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SOCIETIES. The objective is to show that discipline as defined, which is a matter of learning, is not intended to be a gulf separating the two societies but a practiced theory that will tie the individual to both areas and in fact be common to both societies. Every American citizen, whether in or out of uniform, must share the responsibility for preserving our freedom and our way of life. For in modern warfare, the home front is but an extension of the fighting front. There are no distant front lines, remote no-man's lands, far off rear areas. Courage and loyalty are expected of every American. And every American might well adopt as his own personal code the Code of Conduct for the serviceman.

The objective of an Army officer is the "management of violence" and the enlisted man's objective is the carrying out of the same. Both are peculiar to the Army but representative

of all the people in time of war. It came to the government's attention very forcibly after World War II that there was a need to explain this course of action. The Manual of Military Justice explains that this action is thrust upon our citizens in time of war. The soldier, by virtue of discipline, was directed to perform a duty without question. To question the order meant lack of confidence in his leaders. At the same time he was placed in a horrible dilemma to carry out an order by blind obedience that was against his conscience as a civilian and a man of peace. The Code was then altered to allow the soldier his right to question an order that might be a violation of the rules of warfare or against the principles of humanity.<sup>2</sup> This became a practiced rule in the trials at Nurnberg. The burden of proof was transferred from the court to the one standing trial. The defendant must make every effort to prove his innocence rather than the court having to prove his guilt. The guilt was taken for granted. The important issue concerned the circumstances of carrying out an act of war.<sup>3</sup>

There have been many times in history when military leaders thought it best to segregate the soldier from his civilian life or background as completely as possible. Sir Reginald Hargreaves, a retired British General, believed the

soldier should stay in the confines of his military home and went so far as to speak out against weekend leaves. He believed the leaves tended to cause confusion in the life of the soldier.<sup>4</sup> This would naturally lead us to assume that there is a great difference in the two societies. This is, of course, quite true. There is no effort here to combine the two societies into a civil/military singularity nor to question the duality of roles. It is the purpose of this thesis to show that the learning process called discipline is basic in the life of an individual both in the military and civilian existence and should not be distinguished in either society, such as existing in one and not the other.

The dictionary gives the definition of discipline thus: "Control gained by enforcing obedience or order, as in a school or Army; hence, orderly conduct; as, troops noted for their discipline." Here no distinction is made between discipline in the military and discipline in the civilian society. It would be better for both areas of society if there never existed a boundary between the two. Unfortunately there is a wide gap both in theory and practice. The rude awakening of Americans to the character of the soldier during the Korean conflict made them realize the importance discipline plays in every walk of life in a democracy. Who was responsible for the breakdown in

the character of the American soldier? The school? The Army? It became apparent that the one thing missing in the life of the soldier was discipline. Irrefutable evidence indicates the American home, the American educational system, the American churches and the training procedures of the United States Army were responsible. These have been responsible for the total training of our people in American history and tradition. We can see, therefore, the need for a united effort in establishing and maintaining discipline throughout the total area of society.

Before we proceed to the application of discipline we must realize that the use of discipline does not in any way conflict with freedom. In American democracy where freedom flourishes the use of discipline reenforces all the principles that hold it together. To the East German living under the hammer and sickle of communism the word has a sinister connotation. Discipline there chains man to the wheels of industry and makes him a slave to machinery that grinds out ruthlessness and suffering. In our land freedom is manufactured by the industrious from raw materials mined from the soul of man. Here man has the desire to create this product, working together, supplying the world over with freedom as it is demanded. In a word we can say that we MUST work at producing freedom or it

would cease to exist and the use of that word even with its application of obedience and discipline does not conflict with our national liberty.

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in The Military Review, March 1958, p.11

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in The Military Review, Feb. 1958, p.9

<sup>3</sup>ibid

<sup>4</sup>Quoted in The Military Review, December 1958, p.72

## CHAPTER II

### DISCIPLINE AS A MENACE

The conflict between the things one feels like doing at the moment and the things that one knows one should not do, makes early childhood troublesome and challenging to the parent or leader. We can be more understanding of this type of situation if we realize more fully the story behind the conflict.

Early in life the small child knows no "I should do..." only "I want to do..." In the beginning the child wants to eat, wants to sleep, wants to eliminate, wants to hold and touch, and does whatever he feels like doing. Then comes the first "No". Mother or father says, "Don't touch: wait a minute for the bottle" or "Don't eat that piece of coal!" The "No" is repeated for a while until the child says it himself. The Child really says, "Baby must not touch." He knows now that he must not eat the piece of coal, although he would like to try, for taking things into the mouth is one of the earliest drives.

For a short time the conflict continues. He feels like putting everything into his mouth and he knows that he should not do it. Sometimes he gives in, other times he stops himself. After a while, the wish and the censor become one. He gives up wanting to put everything into his mouth and no longer has to feel guilty for wanting to do something he knows he should not



do. He has learned the meaning of discipline. When the negative demand becomes his own commands or the commands of his parents he has indeed learned self-discipline and, in return, love from his parents. When there is not enough love, a young child often fails to incorporate his parent's commands into his own personality, and though he knows what he should or should not do, he does not act on that knowledge. When there is the right kind of firm and accepting love, the standards of right and wrong are made part of the growing person. The wishes of the child and the commands have become one.

During the first five years the child establishes an attitude toward authority and discipline. If he tries rebellion and negativism and gets around the prohibitions, he concludes that adult opinions can be disregarded. If he accidentally breaks a vase or tests one of the rules and is severely punished, he concludes that risking disapproval is much too unsafe.

An important emphasis should be made here in regard to discipline---It is not synonymous with punishment. It is far more closely related to discipleship, from which the word itself was derived. One of our most quoted principles is: "You can punish any child you have the right and strength to punish. You can only discipline those children who make themselves your disciples."<sup>1</sup> Winning the love and respect of the child is the

main thing. What kind of punishment you use is quite secondary.

We have called this chapter "Menace" and that is just what early discipline is to the small child. But as the years go by the child becomes more and more sensible and discipline is a part of the child, such as love, patience and understanding. We now come to another chapter in the life of the young person where discipline becomes a conflict and raises its head to strike out at the freedom loving adolescent.

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<sup>1</sup>Ligon, Ernest M. "Dimensions of Character", MacMillan Co., New York, 1956, p. 109

## CHAPTER III

### DISCIPLINE AND MATURITY

In adolescence the original conflict between "I want to do" and "I should do" is torn open once more, and discipline is again needed to strengthen the rational part of the young person. There are really more pressures on the early drives than the young person can handle and some gives way.

Many times the young man has confused discipline with lack of freedom. A professor of Religious Education at the University of Chicago writes about a conversation he had with a teen-age boy who, he points out, is a good student. It was in a discussion group on freedom and the boy burst out: "And when I say freedom, I mean freedom. I mean to wear a red shirt, own a hot-rod, and stay out as late as I please."<sup>1</sup>

Let us take the case of a young man about seventeen years of age. He will soon be out of high school and up to this point his parents have found him a very sensible boy and quite mature in judgment. They know that he has been seeing a girl named Judy for about two years. Then it leaks out that Judy has another boy friend. The boy friend is able to support himself and is a menace in the eyes of young Tom. Tom broods, begins to stay out late, runs with a crowd that had been shunned

before. His parents soon learn that he is not doing so well in school and finally Tom tells them that he has decided not to go to school but to go out and get a job. His father had never laid a heavy hand on Tom but had exerted a type of discipline in the home that tended to reflect a great deal of respect upon all members of the family. One night his father answered the phone which was for Tom. He handed the phone to Tom and went back into the living room. The person on the phone wanted Tom to meet him and the other boys for a late rendezvous. Tom's mother turned to him and said, "I think it is time that you exercised discipline or authority." He went back to the hall and after a brief conversation with his son, Tom said, "Dad, are you forbidding me to go out?" His father nodded and smiled.

It was all clear now, the word "forbidding" had given it away. It was up to Tom until this time to make most of his decisions, now he needed someone else and it was almost as if he wanted his father to come to his rescue. The word "forbid" had never been used in the home and Tom, himself, was the first to use it. It indicated that Tom had a deep rooted love for right and if his father had said, "It's up to you, son", it would have been cruel. It was a conflict in the boy's life and he needed a refresher course in discipline to help him

recover his security.

At this stage of life the young people need some direction to keep them in the proper course and without it psychological urges could completely leave them to the mercy of harmful influences.

It is in this stage of life that the young recruit comes on duty with the army that is known for its emphasis on discipline. To some it will be a comfort and a protection to themselves; to others it will become a millstone around their necks. To the latter it would have been far better to stay a civilian, which leads us to another chapter, DISCIPLINE AND THE MILITARY.

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<sup>1</sup>Snyder, Ross. "A Ministry of Meanings and Relationships", Pastoral Psychology, December 1960, Vol. 11, No. 109, p.18

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCIPLINE AND THE MILITARY

Field Marshall Earl Wavell said, "The relationship between a general and his troops is very much like that between the rider and his horse. The horse must be controlled and disciplined, and yet encouraged: Be cared for in the stable as if he was worth 500 pounds and ridden in the field as if he was worth half-a-crown. The horse knows by his own comfort whether he is being ridden well or badly, but he knows if his rider is bold or frightened, determined or hesitating."<sup>1</sup>

To say that a good soldier must have discipline is no more than to say that he was taught well and learned his stride early in life. The care and control over him determines his usefulness in the field. Discipline is teaching which makes a man do something which he would not, unless he had learned that it was the right, the proper, and the expedient thing to do. At its best, it is instilled and maintained by pride in oneself, in one's unit, in one's profession; only at its worst by a fear of punishment. The military manifestations of discipline are many and various. At one end of the scale may be placed the outward display, such as saluting and smartness or drill; the mechanical side of discipline; learning by practice to do something automatically<sup>50</sup> that it becomes natural. Learning is

essential both to warfare and to orderly efficient civilian life. If anyone doubts this, let him consider the discipline he employs daily in his rising up and his lying down; the time, for instance, that it would take him to tie his tie, if he came to it unpracticed.

One great difficulty of training the individual soldier in peace is to instill discipline and yet preserve the initiative and independence needed in war. The best soldier in peace is not necessarily the best soldier in war, though more often he is, and it is not easy in peace conditions to recognize the man who will make good in war.

Morale is the inward spiritual side of discipline and whatever may inspire morale becomes an essential element of any military force. The spirit of the soldier is the ultimate factor of success in war. The spirit which we call morale, is a collective rather than an individual quality. Military discipline should tend at all times to foster the growth of the spirit in the individual, not break his spirit, for it is necessary to consider that the man will later be a part of the group. On a few occasions the army has treated a man like a group, which he is not, but a part, and his individualism was turned away from cooperation with others. Massinger in four lines of poetry says,

"If e'er my son  
Follow the war, tell him it is a school  
Where all the principles tending to honour  
Are taught, if truly followed."E

As Socrates pointed out in 410 B.C., "Good Order" is essential to any efficient fighting force, since a disorderly mob is no more an army than a heap of building materials is a house. "Good Order" is founded upon discipline; and the corner stone in the edifice of discipline is the prompt, whole-hearted, and unquestioned obedience to orders.<sup>3</sup> We do not need to go back to such ancient history to find examples of good order in the military. Histories of battles throughout the centuries contribute their successes or failures to the principles of good order. When good order has been observed victories have been won even against unbelievable odds, when the principle has been violated chaos and defeat followed.

After World War II there were 35,000 prisoners in disciplinary barracks, federal prisons and military stockades, serving sentences from general courts martial. Four years after the war the number was reduced to 3200. At the close of the Korean conflict there were 13,300 American soldiers residing in these institutions.<sup>4</sup> We notice at once that there is a great difference between peacetime and wartime losses in military manpower. The answer is that in peacetime when men are trained for war, but not actually engaged in war, an effort is continually made to eliminate these types of individuals from the armed forces. There have been many studies made by experts into the



sociological and psychological reasons why some men cannot accept military life but actually hinder the operations and training of troops. There are only two reliable conclusions: First, the intelligence level; second, the Educational Achievement level. There is also the immature group whose absence from home and community restraints results in an abandonment of moral obligation.<sup>5</sup>

The absence of discipline has contributed to military delinquency and the lack of discipline may be traced to the intelligence and educational achievement levels of the individual. Since discipline is a part of learning, both categories are certainly applicable. There is more to intelligence than mere classical education or the application of discipline. Arward Starbuck points out that neither the discipline nor the subject matter of classical education is of such direct value as to spend time on either of them.<sup>6</sup> He indicates that on many occasions a man has learned well and acquired intelligence in idea observance with little formal education. The communists in Europe endeavoring to teach communism in the countries they have occupied depend heavily upon the schools to follow the party line in their curriculum. Their problem is to keep the teacher in check that private thoughts be eliminated. Stern disciplinary measures serve as the main deterrent to teacher disobedience and various other devices have been developed.<sup>7</sup> The teacher is

only a problem in American schools if there is no resolve bridging what is taught and the manner of teaching. One of the greatest attributes of our system of education is to instill into the student a deep desire to learn because it will do him and his country good. The state depends upon the education of its people for its own propigation and this belief is the discipline necessary for motivation.

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<sup>1</sup>Wavell, Earl. Soldiers and Soldiering. Jonathon Cape, London. 1953, p.35.

<sup>2</sup>Massinger. London Sunday Times, August 26, 1945

<sup>3</sup>Reginald Hargreaves; quoted in Military Review, page 3, February 1958.

<sup>4</sup>Col. Raymond R. Ramsey. Quoted in Army Information Digest, page 23, March 1959.

<sup>5</sup>ibid

<sup>6</sup>Arward Starbuck, Indictive Study, p. 392. Dryden Press, New York. 1940.

<sup>7</sup>Edward Taborsky, Conformity under Communism, page 15, Public Affairs Press. Washington, D.C. 1958.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCIPLINE AND MORALE

We have been talking primarily in the last few paragraphs about discipline and morale in the military situation. We must consider that morale is a very important factor in the civilian community as well. We must also be concerned with the effect which some conceptions of discipline may have upon the civilian effort. If the boys go to camps and become disgusted by much that they live through, particularly as to the relations obtaining between the different racial groups which share the hardships of military life, and the relations obtaining between soldiers and civilians; if they come out of camp, even on a week-end leave, feeling that the Army does not understand the relation of discipline to democracy, the effect on civilian morale can be devastating and there has already been tragic evidence that this is the case.<sup>1</sup>

The case for civilian morale is important in another area. The civilian society needs to be disciplined to accept the extra burden placed before them in a war situation. During World War II it was felt that the general public should be given information that would contribute to their supporting the war effort. By a few psychological gimmicks most of the populace were quite happy to lend their aid to support of the troops "over there." When our armies were making great headway there was no need for any

morale building programs, but frequently we resorted to activities that would discipline the people by keeping them busy. Kept busily manufacturing supplies and war materials for the forces the populace had little time to feel sorry for themselves. Disciplined and led by encouragement for active participation did away with most of their fears and worries. Many of the people collected scrap tin foil for the war effort. Large bails were submitted in the name of "Self sacrifice". It has always been my conjecture that this was for discipline rather than need.

Hitler was the perfect example of mass discipline. In 1938 I heard him speak before a giant rally of 100,000 people in Nurnberg. In all that vast array of individuals one could have heard the drop of a pin on the stadium floor. They were completely enraptured by the words and personality of the speaker. This goes beyond mere words, however, in that the people themselves were ready to give themselves totally to a cause that they were disciplined to accept. The Germans were psychologically disciplined to total acceptance. Subtract the personality of Hitler and the nationalism of a people, the masses of America are disciplined to accept the form of democracy that excites in them the need for human freedom. All the people need is the proper presentation, or, as we may call it, motivation to accept the truth that a way of life is worth fighting for.

The old saying that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link applied to society testifies to the strength of the American individual as it is needed to the whole area of national character. We dare not limit our missionary zeal to military dependency alone. Even the strength of our fighting forces depends upon the type of material it has to rely on, the population. We can readily see the importance of joining the two societies together for the sake of single mindedness toward citizenship. If education is the uniting force, greater emphasis should be placed in the educational curriculum on American democracy. This can be done without destroying the name of democracy or freedom because the very nature of the two is adherence to good order which is also discipline. In business, politics, and wherever the group aspires, morale is essential to promote the best efforts of everyone.

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<sup>1</sup>Watson, Goodwin, "Civilian Morale", Cornwall Press, Cornwall, N.Y., 1942 pages 417-418

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

In the co-ordination of the intelligences and wills of over one hundred million "whole" men and women lies the formula for an invincible American morale. Since we are dealing with the principle ingredient of morale, discipline, let us consider the three contributions it will make toward high national morale.

First is the possession by the individual of a solid set of convictions which for him makes life worth living. We may say that this is the preparation of a healthy outlook or state that endows him with abundant energy and confidence in facing the future; a self disciplined effort to achieve specific objectives that derive from his personal convictions and values. The individual is aware of specific tasks that he must carry through, of problems that he must solve, in order to defend and extend his stores of values. In fact it would be the same thing as assigning everyone a task to perform, a plan to be carried through. This is active discipline. It is every one's job to work at democracy.

The second contribution is toward group participation. The solidarity of the group is very important whether it be a civilian society or a military society. The agreement among citizens, especially in times of crisis, in respect to their convictions and values strengthens the nation as a whole.

Finally our national morale is the substance of combined opinion that American Democracy is worth fighting for. Then to become equipped to fight for it we must accept a national type of discipline. As a combined society we adhere to certain principles and controls to make our democracy invincible. Our national morale and its concomitant, the discipline of the citizenry, both civilian and military are dependent upon a renewed appreciation of the primary reasons for our existence as a free nation. The priceless freedom which we enjoy today is a result of the heritage which has been handed down to us. Divided into numerous religious and cultural groups, all Americans are nevertheless united in the classical objectives which inspired our founding fathers, that men are born with equal rights, under God, and that all share in the obligation to safeguard these rights for ourselves and our descendants. The Graeco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian heritage of which we are all beneficiaries have given us our national objective: to keep alive the concept that man is made in the image and the likeness of God his creator. Man, as such, is entitled to rights and bound by obligations. The pre-requisite to any national morale and national discipline is the appreciation of these rights and objectives.

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